REMARKS

This Amendment and Response to Final Office Action is being submitted in response to the final Office Action mailed March 5, 2007. Claims 1, 7, and 9-21 are pending in the Application. Claims 1, 7, and 9-21 stand rejected.

Claims 1, 7, 9-10, 13-14, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,465,251) in view of Saleh et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,801,496) and Matsuzawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,389,023).

Claims 12, 15-17, and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al., Saleh et al., and Matsuzawa et al. in view of "Official Notice".

In response to these rejections, the Claims have been amended herein, without prejudice or disclaimer to continued examination on the merits. These amendments are fully supported in the Specification, Drawings, and Claims of the Application and no new matter has been added. Based upon the amendments, reconsideration of the Application is respectfully requested, without further search, in view of the following remarks.

Rejection of Claims 1, 7, 9-10, 13-14, and 18 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) - Judd et al. Saleh et al., Matsuzawa et al.:

Claims 1, 7, 9-10, 13-14, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,465,251) in view of Saleh et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,801,496) and Matsuzawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,389,023).

Examiner states that Judd and Saleh do not specifically teach an identifier field containing an identifier, wherein the identifier indicates whether the message packet

contains relative address protocol information. Matsuzawa et al. teach the use of an identifier field storing upper layer protocol identification (col. 4, lines 37-44, col. 5, lines 61-64, col. 8, lines 54-69, col. 9, lines 1-19, 26-34). Examiner further notes that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Judd et al., Saleh et al., and Matsuzawa et al. because Matsuzawa et al. teach using an identifier field that enables the packets to store information regarding an upper level protocol and enables Judd et al. and Saleh et al. packets to be transferred using the identified protocol (col. 13, lines 4-8).

Independent Claim 1 is recited here, as amended:

1. An address protocol for forwarding a message packet from a source node to a destination node along a sequence of communicatively coupled nodes functioning as a linear chain network, the address protocol comprising:

a relative source address field programmed with an initial value at the source node corresponding to a destination node that is a preselected number of nodes away from the source node along the linear chain network;

a relative destination address field containing a counter and a directional code corresponding to a port of the source node from which the message packet is to be sent along the linear chain network;

wherein the counter is incremented by a preselected step in value at each node the message packet is forwarded to along the chain network until the counter reaches the initial value, thereby indicating that the destination node has been reached;

an identifier field containing an identifier, wherein the identifier indicates whether the message packet contains relative address protocol information; and

wherein the destination node does not require address information in addition to the counter reaching the initial value to accept the message packet; and

wherein, when in the sequence of communicatively coupled nodes functioning as a linear chain network, a data packet encounters a node having two or more output ports, namely a branching node, the branching node has programming configured to return a message indicating that the branching node was reached and reporting the number of hops the branching node is away from the source node.

Similar amendments have been made to independent Claims 14 and 18.

None of Judd et al., Saleh et al., and Matsuzawa et al., or any combination of the three, teach or suggest these limitations. Judd et al., Saleh et al., and Matsuzawa et al. do not teach a relative address protocol that is extended to accommodate branching nodes. Judd et al., Saleh et al., and Matsuzawa et al. do not teach or suggest that ***in the sequence of communicatively coupled nodes functioning as a linear chain network, when a data packet encounters a node having two or more output ports, namely a branching node, the branching node has programming configured to return a message indicating that the branching node was reached and reporting the number of hops the branching node is away from the source node.***

Thus, Applicant submits that amended independent Claims 1, 14, and 18 now recite elements/limitations not taught, or suggested by, Judd et al., Saleh et al., Matsuzawa et al., or any combination thereof Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection of independent Claims 1, 14, and 18, as well as any dependent Claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al. in view of Saleh et al. and Matsuzawa et al. has now been overcome and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claim 12 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) - Judd et al., Saleh et al., and "Official Notice":

Claims 12, 15-17, and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al., Saleh et al., and Matsuzawa et al. in view of "Official Notice".

The above arguments apply with equal force to Claims 12, 15-17, and 19-21. Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection of Claims 12, 15-17, and 19-21 under 35

U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Judd et al., Saleh et al., and Matsuzawa et al. and in view of the "Official Notice" has now been overcome and respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicant would like to thank Examiner for the attention and consideration accorded the present Application. Should Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place the Application in condition for allowance, Examiner is encouraged to contact undersigned Counsel at the telephone number, facsimile number, address, or email address provided below. It is not believed that any fees for additional claims, extensions of time, or the like are required beyond those that may otherwise be indicated in the documents accompanying this paper. However, if such additional fees are required, Examiner is encouraged to notify undersigned Counsel at Examiner's earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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